



General Assembly

Fifty-second Session

35th

plenary meeting

Wednesday, 22 October 1997, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Udovenko (Ukraine)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tello (Mexico), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Address by Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Chissano: On behalf of the people and the Government of Mozambique, and indeed on my own behalf, it is a great honour for me to address this august Assembly. I bring to you the warm felicitations and best wishes of all Mozambicans.

Two years ago, during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we committed ourselves not only to save succeeding generations from the

scourge of war, but also to rededicate our efforts to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness for our universal Organization, with a view to enabling it to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries. Therefore, our deliberations in all subsequent General Assembly sessions should reflect that firm political will and commitment.

On that occasion, I informed the Assembly of the progress we had achieved in our continued endeavours to consolidate peace and democracy and promote socioeconomic development. I am happy to state that, today, these positive trends are prevailing and that the situation in my country is improving. We envision the future with renewed optimism.

Our pluralist democracy continues to flourish; we are further strengthening our democratic institutions; and the state of the economy is gradually and steadily improving. However, many challenges lie ahead. We still have schools and hospitals to rehabilitate, and new ones to build. We still have roads to repair, and new ones to build. We still have landmines to clear. We have to address our heavy debt burden and find ways and means of bringing it to sustainable levels.

These challenges are indeed immense, but not insurmountable. With hard work and the generous support of the international community, I am sure we shall succeed in our quest for better living standards for our people. The United Nations and the international community at large have invested a lot in order to ensure

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a lasting peace and stability in Mozambique. I say to all the members of the international community: your effective work has helped put an end to the suffering of our people in a delicate and complex peace process. The cost of peace was high, but it would have been higher if you had failed to fulfil your obligations. We therefore urge you to recommit yourselves to providing all necessary means for the consolidation of the peace you have helped to achieve.

The advent of peace has made it possible for Mozambicans to rededicate themselves to the implementation of sound political and economic reforms, with visible positive results. It is our earnest desire to take maximum advantage of the rich potential of our natural resources and to use them in a sustainable and balanced manner with a view to creating wealth and a better future for our people.

As a result of the implementation of the structural adjustment programme, launched in 1987 under the most adverse conditions, encouraging developments are taking place in our economy. In 1996 the gross domestic product grew by around 6.4 per cent and exports increased by 24 per cent. The inflation rate declined sharply to 16.6 per cent from 70 per cent in 1994 and 54 per cent in 1995. The mid-year evaluation indicates 3.2 per cent, and we expect a single-digit cumulative rate for 1997. Moreover, we have also registered important progress in currency stabilization. We estimate that the 1997 figures for virtually all major economic indicators will be better than the previous ones.

Our successes in the consolidation of peace and democracy reflect the values our people have inherited throughout history; they reflect our common desire and noble aspirations to live together in unity and harmony within diversity, thanks to our growing culture of tolerance and forgiveness. They also constitute a vivid example of a culture of peace we have embraced in our country. We believe that the promotion and further consolidation of a culture of peace should be the next most important challenge to all societies as well as to each individual citizen.

It was within this framework that my Government, in close collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), convened at Maputo a conference on culture of peace and good governance. The outcome of this conference and of other similar conferences that have taken place worldwide was to recognize once again the existing relationship between peace, democracy and development, as well as the common

challenges to all countries committed to implementing these values and processes. For these reasons, I welcome the efforts under way towards the adoption of a meaningful draft resolution on this contemporary issue.

Peace and stability cannot be ensured by the mere holding of multiparty elections, nor should they be seen as a simple absence of military conflict. Recent history proves that in conflict resolution a proper balance should be struck between the need for elections, with their inherent hostile and partisan propaganda, and the need for reconciliation that should follow the aftermath of a democratic process.

Our own experience reminds us that it is not enough to ensure reconciliation of former conflicting parties in order to guarantee a lasting peace. Our task today is to guarantee that a culture of peace is embedded in the minds of all citizens as an important step forward in conflict prevention and management. All citizens are called upon to participate, notwithstanding the diversity of opinions and sometimes of interests. Only commitment to supreme national interests can ensure that individual interests do not hamper these noble objectives.

Peace and democracy are fundamental tools for fostering development in all its aspects, especially in today's world, where one fifth of the world population is still confronted with absolute poverty, hunger and malnutrition, illiteracy and endemic disease. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us to take concerted actions in order to reverse this picture and to create an enabling environment for sustained development, with emphasis on education and the provision of basic health care, potable water and housing.

This requires the strengthening of the rule of law, good governance, transparency and accountability. It also requires security in all its components, including economic, social, environmental and all related issues. As we are about to cross the threshold of the new millennium, the concept of security must be considered in its global dimension. No country, no matter how big or how small, can develop in isolation. Indeed, environmental problems, refugees and displaced persons, transboundary movements of people and goods, drug trafficking, money laundering and other transnational crimes can only be addressed effectively through a cooperative approach in a global context.

Without peace and democracy, development will always be in jeopardy, and issues related to governance

and social instability will continue to confront future generations. That is why democracy and development, two faces of the same coin, remain a daunting challenge to our societies. This is an undertaking that requires a common approach from all Governments and from civil society, including the private sector.

These are equally the challenges facing the southern African region today. Because we believe that only collective efforts will bring about durable peace and stability and sustainable development, we attach great importance to regional cooperation within the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). With 14 member States and about 170 million people, SADC is a viable economic bloc poised to play a positive role in the efforts for continental development.

The 1997 annual summit of Heads of State or Government of our Community reviewed the activities of the organization and developments that had taken place in the region since the last summit. Within the framework of the establishment of the African Economic Community, and as one of its building blocks, we are, *inter alia*, according top priority in our domestic agendas to issues pertaining to the social development of our countries so as to ensure that our policies and strategies are in response to, and in support of, national priorities. Special emphasis is being given to the need for investment in the development of technology and infrastructures.

The summit also considered the applications for membership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Seychelles, and decided to welcome those countries as the newest members of our Community.

The summit discussed in great detail the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have agreed that the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires and deserves support from the international community in order to enable its newly established Government and its people to cope with the developmental challenges deriving from three decades of uncertainty.

A stable Democratic Republic of the Congo is equally vital for the attainment of the peace that has so far eluded the Great Lakes region and for the efforts under way with a view to finding a political settlement of the conflict ravaging the neighbouring Congo.

Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has major strategic importance for the development of the region, and indeed, of the whole continent of Africa, given

its great potential in such key areas as energy, water, tourism, transport and communications.

The issue of transport and communication is of paramount importance to southern Africa. The establishment of the Maputo, Beira and Nacala corridors are fundamental steps towards improving transport and communications within the region.

The concept of development corridors we are implementing in southern Africa represents a new partnership we are building in the region between Government, entrepreneurs and communities. A development corridor is not only a road or railway linking a harbour to one point at the border of a neighbouring country, but also, and more importantly, an area along the communications routes and beyond them into the interior of the countries concerned and open for investment in a great variety of economic activities, thus bringing about an integrated development of the region.

The areas of investment include improvements of sea ports and railways; improvement and construction of highways; and gas pipelines, energy and communications infrastructures, livestock, forestry, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, industry and tourism. We believe, therefore, that the development corridors will contribute significantly towards the realization of the noble goals and aspirations of the peoples of the region.

This is the path we have embarked on in southern Africa. We believe that, in so doing, we are making a positive contribution towards conflict prevention, resolution and management in Africa, and to building the blocks that shall sustain the development of our continent. In order to guarantee political stability as well as the sustainability of our development efforts, the region has established, within SADC, an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security with the responsibility of preventing, resolving and managing conflicts in the region.

This is the future that we envisage for the African continent: a continent in which the rule of law and legitimacy is above all other interests; a continent in which democracy, accountability and good governance must prevail; a continent in which development and social justice are promoted and safeguarded by all of us. This is where cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity must be further strengthened.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mozambique for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/392)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/52/392.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(b) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/440)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly has before it document A/52/440, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee, which will occur as a result of the expiration on 31 December 1997 of the terms of office of the Bahamas, Benin, France, Ghana, Mexico, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that, after 1 January 1998, the following States will still be members of the Committee: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cameroon, China, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

Therefore, those 25 States are not eligible in this election.

The following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council: two African States for two vacancies — Uganda and Zambia; one Eastern European State for one vacancy — the Russian Federation; two Latin American and Caribbean States for two vacancies — the Bahamas and Mexico; two Western European and other States for two vacancies — the United States of America and France.

As stated in document A/52/440, the Economic and Social Council has postponed to a future session of the Council the nomination of two other members from the Western European and other States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 1999.

The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States is equal to or does not exceed the number of seats to be filled in each of those regions.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections shall be held by secret ballot. However, in accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the Assembly may, in elections to subsidiary organs, dispense with secret balloting when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council from among the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States — the Bahamas, France, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Uganda, the United States of America and Zambia — elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1998?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I congratulate the States that have been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

With regard to the two remaining vacancies to be filled from among the Western European and other States, the General Assembly will be in a position to act on them upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council of two Member States from that region.

I therefore propose that the Assembly keep this sub-item on the agenda of the fifty-second session.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that procedure.

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 25

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/376)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.6)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.6.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 25, the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", which

is sponsored by the 27 member States of the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

We are grateful for the report contained in document A/52/376, which the Secretary-General has submitted to the Member States of the United Nations in accordance with resolution 50/14, adopted by consensus at a previous session of the General Assembly.

The draft resolution introduced today has no financial implications, and its content is similar to those of the resolution adopted unanimously at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

I am pleased to report, however, that between the adoption of resolution 50/14 two years ago and the present draft, SELA has taken a series of decisions that are worth mentioning here, by way of complementing the report. The report refers to the work done by the system before the adoption of the resolution and, naturally, since it refers only to cooperation between SELA and specialized agencies of the system, it has not taken into account important decisions that have been reached, in particular at the recent meeting of the Latin American Council, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 6 to 9 October of this year, to which I shall refer momentarily.

From 1995 to the present SELA has accomplished a fundamental reorientation and adaptation in order to achieve two main objectives: first, to help the 27 members become integrated into the current international environment and, secondly, to coordinate their agendas for regional, hemispheric and international actions. This latter aspect is of particular importance because SELA is the only system that encompasses all the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Council has therefore concentrated its endeavours on eight thematic areas, deemed priorities for development. These include analysing the process of globalization of the international economy, tracking the relations of the countries of the region with their principal economic partners and using computers to disseminate information.

All this is contained in a summary entitled "A current vision of SELA", which was prepared by SELA at the request of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. This is not a United Nations document, but it is available in English and Spanish and includes an index of

the recent studies conducted by SELA, which are also available on the Internet.

The meeting of the Latin American Council at Port-of-Spain was focused on the theme "growth and employment" because the member Governments were of the view that adjustment and restructuring policies were falling short of resolving the problems besetting the most disadvantaged sectors of the region's populations: youth and women. In that regard, at that meeting 10 specific points for action were laid out, and they are contained in the aforementioned summary.

The next meeting of the Latin American Council, in 1998, will focus on the theme "the dynamics of external relations of Latin America and the Caribbean" and will no doubt also take into account the results of the second Hemispheric Summit and the preparatory work for the biregional summit of Latin America and the European Union, to be held early in 1999.

All this means that the Latin American Economic System, with its relatively modest resources, is making available to the countries of the region the capacity to coordinate regional and subregional actions that coincide with the priorities laid down in the international agenda. All this is being done in coordination and cooperation with organizations such as those mentioned in the draft resolution we are introducing.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional project entitled "Support to SELA", a project of great importance to Latin America and the Caribbean, came to an end last year. We request that — to the extent possible, and in accordance with the decisions of the Executive Board, which are binding for UNDP, this cooperation will not be completely lacking.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean hope that — as part of the reorientation of international cooperation, which calls for efficiency and realistic goals — the work done by SELA will be given due consideration.

Mr. Pino (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela wishes to express its particular interest in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and Latin American Economic System (SELA), which was introduced by the delegation of Peru.

We are firmly convinced that SELA has been and will continue to be an effective and efficient instrument for consultation, coordination and cooperation among the nations of our Latin American and Caribbean region. In fact, SELA is making invaluable efforts in promoting the coordination of governmental policies in priority areas for our countries, such as economic integration, the active participation of our region in world trade, social development, technical cooperation, financing and investment, among others.

Consultation and coordination activities intended to harmonize common positions and strategies of the countries of our region in the economic field, offer the region ways to take more appropriate actions in order to become part of the demanding globalized economy now confronting us. In addition, SELA's analyses, activities and publications have enabled us to identify specific solutions to specific problems. In this context, the relationship of SELA, through formal coordination mechanisms, with United Nations bodies and other regional and extraregional organizations, such as the Andean Development Corporation, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States and the Caribbean Community, to mention but a few, has enabled us to make more efficient use of the technical and financial resources available to the region.

Since its establishment in 1975, the Latin American Economic System (SELA) has maintained a productive, cooperative relationship with the United Nations. Over the years that relationship has been strengthened and diversified to the benefit of the countries of our region.

On this occasion we wish to appeal to the bodies and programmes of the United Nations system to continue to provide increasing support for the work carried out by the Latin American Economic System.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina would like to make a brief statement to express its support for the promotion of and the search for new cooperation mechanisms between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations. We welcome the Secretary-General's report, which describes in detail the progress made in the area of cooperation among United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes, with particular emphasis on the relationship between SELA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The adoption of free-market policies, the opening up of trade, decreased State intervention, and economic integration have effectively increased the efficiency of interregional mechanisms to revitalize trade, increase production, encourage investment and promote technological development. Likewise, the process of international trade liberalization has made clear the need to coordinate positions within the new international trade framework that emerged in the wake of the Uruguay Round.

The democratization process and changes in outside development strategies have been additional reasons for revitalizing integration and regional growth.

However, much remains to be done in terms of regional development. According to the conclusions of the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in São Paulo, Brazil, economic growth in the region has not been sufficient speedily to overcome social problems, given the low rate of savings and investment, a lack of dynamism in the job sector, marked social shortcomings and the existing gap between economic growth and the growth of the labour force.

This outlook reaffirms the need to revitalize mechanisms for coordination and cooperation. SELA is an important tool to assist in effectively integrating the Latin American region into the new realities of a broader market. Mechanisms for political and economic coordination in our region have developed in part thanks to existing cooperation mechanisms with the United Nations system, but it is clear that civil society has also played an important role in regional integration. The participation of new players has increased institutional involvement and given a new dynamism to the joint negotiating capacity of the countries within the system. Likewise, the involvement of non-State agents has encouraged our Governments to renew their efforts to support existing principles and mechanisms in order to achieve the objective of regional cooperation.

We must confront existing problems in a coordinated manner at the subregional, regional and international levels. While it is the responsibility of the countries of the region themselves to respond adequately to the new challenges posed by development, the advantages provided by close cooperation and collaboration between the region and the United Nations system will allow us to complement our regional approach with a universal one, and it will also give our countries alternative tools to help resolve the

difficulties that have arisen on the path towards sustainable economic growth.

That is why the commitments to participate actively, to provide concrete support to the countries of the region and to strengthen international cooperation mechanisms such as the anticipated cooperation between SELA and the United Nations are complementary activities essential to the discharging of the mandate of SELA, which was established in Panama in 1975. Let us not forget to mention Venezuela, which has generously provided the headquarters for this body and has had a decisive influence on matters relating to cooperation and to the founding, transformative ideals of SELA.

On behalf of Argentina, I wish to express our strong support for the draft resolution submitted to the Assembly for its consideration. We believe that it accurately reflects the feeling in the region in terms of our future strategies for inter-institutional cooperation between the United Nations and SELA, and that it will respond to the challenges of both growth and modernization in Latin America.

Mr. Mungra (Suriname): I have the honour to address this meeting on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Suriname.

Allow me at the outset to extend our delegations' sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative report (A/52/376), in which he informs us of the various cooperation activities that have been carried out between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations system, in particular with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Considering the increased cooperation we have witnessed during the past year in support of Latin American and Caribbean Member States in the field of

designing policies on social development — including the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development — on economic integration and on trends in the globalization process, our delegations are in favour of a further broadening and deepening of the mutual supporting activities between ECLAC and the Latin American Economic System, as expressed this morning by the representative of Peru.

During the general debate in the Second Committee, many delegations expressed their concern at the threat of the marginalization of many of the developing countries, in particular the small and vulnerable States, as a consequence of the globalization process. In this regard, the small, fragile and vulnerable economies of CARICOM member States should be given special attention by the United Nations system. Existing regional development institutions should be further strengthened in order to enhance their capacity to assist individual Member States to adapt successfully to the globalization process.

In its guidelines for action for the period 1997 to 2000, the Latin American Economic System has defined its role as an institution for promoting coordination and cooperation among its member States in pursuing the following main objectives: to secure the timely and adequate participation of the 27 member countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the rapidly changing world economy; to contribute to strengthening the regional integration process, both among ourselves and with the outside world; and to enhance the global competitiveness of member States.

In this regard, the organization intends to give priority to promoting exchanges of experiences among member States, to the preparation by SELA of analytical and comparative studies and to follow-up work on key global economic issues with special attention to their regional and subregional aspects.

The goals and responsibilities of SELA as just mentioned are comprehensive, while on the other hand its resources are regrettably limited. We are therefore pleased that cooperation between those various United Nations organizations and SELA has allowed the institution to implement its mandate more fully. We expect that this assistance will be deepened and broadened in the near future.

This year, for the first time in 22 years, the Latin American Economic System held a Council meeting in a Caribbean State, Trinidad and Tobago, thus expressing the

willingness of the organization to incorporate the interests of the Caribbean in a more assertive manner in the SELA work programme. CARICOM is pleased with this development, since it will forge greater cooperation and coordination among the developing countries in our region. Further strengthening of the collaboration between SELA and the United Nations system will undoubtedly enhance this process.

Against this background, I wish, on behalf of the States members of CARICOM, to commend draft resolution A/52/L.6, introduced this morning by the Permanent Representative of Peru, for unanimous adoption.

Mr. Tanasescu (Romania) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my honour to address the Assembly on agenda item 25, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System". It may seem surprising that a country so distant from Latin America should be speaking on such a specific item, but there are rational reasons for this.

First of all, Romania is a Latin country. If we view Latin traits as a very important axis of cultural and spiritual diversity in the modern world, then we can see that this axis has two ends: one in Eastern Europe — in Romania — and the other is in the very South of Latin America. It is no mere happenstance that one of the first to explore Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego was the Romanian Iulio Popper, who visited those areas early in this century and carried out scientific studies of nature there.

Linguistic and cultural affinities between my country and the countries of Latin America are an essential element in the long-standing good relations between us. That is why we follow with interest economic and political developments in the region, along with the role played by the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in promoting such developments.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the item before us and consider that it provides a good basis for discussion. The report affirms that there is convergence between the economic and social items of interest to the United Nations and those of interest to SELA, which is an ongoing positive element in the development of the relationship between the two organizations. I stress the importance of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in this cooperation with SELA, and a number

of recent joint projects on matters of interest not only to Latin America but also to other regions: the definition of economic and social policies, social aspects of regional integration and the role of human resources in the process of restructuring, to mention but a few.

Recent developments in Latin America have confirmed the growing importance of regional cooperation in current process of globalization. The Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) in South America and the Central American Integration System (SICA) in Central America have in recent years strengthened their economic cooperation, showing that regional integration is a way for small and medium-sized countries to respond in a unified way to the challenges of globalization. Regional integration is a defining process of the world economy at the end of the twentieth century, and the countries involved see it as a tool for effective development as they strive for liberalization and for the opening up of their economies. Regional integration is a valid basis for promoting the integration of national economies in an increasingly interdependent and competitive economic world. As a framework for deliberation and cooperation among Latin American countries, SELA has been the starting point for regional integration.

In our view, all these concepts, on which economic efforts and action in Latin America are based, possess a value that has been confirmed by the appearance of similar processes in other regions. The United Nations remains the sole universal forum where we can share our experiences in these processes and exchange ideas and views on the specific needs of each region. We believe that this is one more argument in favour of periodic discussion of this item in the General Assembly. By analyzing items relating to regional cooperation and integration, we can identify the implications of these processes for the future structure of international relations and for the concepts that will define the world in the coming century.

In the 1980s, Latin American countries began a broad process of internal political democratization, economic restructuring and opening to the world. The results give rise to hope for developments on the international front. Without these processes, our debate on this item would be less rich.

At the beginning of the 1990s, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, similar processes began in Central and Eastern Europe, including in my country. Our region now includes more than 20 countries in various stages of the process of creating democratic institutions and legislation,

along with market-economy institutions and mechanisms. There is great interest in formulating approaches to cooperation and regional integration.

Today I wish to make a proposal to our Latin American friends and to the representatives of SELA; it was suggested by a distinguished Argentine academic during the most recent meetings on the On-line Information Key (LINK) project, held under United Nations auspices in May. Here there is an opportunity to begin an exchange of experiences and opinions between the countries of Latin America and those of Central and Eastern Europe on issues that are relevant to the processes that both regions, at different times, have undertaken. The processes under way in both our regions could benefit from our sharing views on progress along the road to democratization, on institutions guaranteeing civil and economic freedom and on the opening up of our economies. With the support of ECLAC and of the Economic Commission for Europe, SELA could provide a framework for this exchange of experiences, and my country would participate in it with great interest.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/3 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Observer for the Latin American Economic System.

Mr. Wagner (Latin American Economic System) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am pleased to express my thanks in particular to the delegation of Peru, which introduced the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). I would also like to thank the delegations of the member States of SELA and that of Romania for having sponsored this draft resolution, as well as delegations that have spoken in favour of it. Of course, I have taken careful note of the initiative suggested by the delegate of Romania on the interesting project for exchanging experiences between Latin America and the Caribbean and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. We will take the necessary coordinating steps to carry it out.

Since 1996 SELA has undergone a process of restructuring and modernization, which is reflected primarily in the reorientation of its work programme and the updating of its modalities for action. The exchange of experiences has been used as the principal mechanism for promoting regional coordination and cooperation.

In keeping with that reorientation, the activities of SELA are now focused on eight themes: an analysis of the expected impact of the process of globalization on the international economy and on the development of Latin America and the Caribbean; a follow-up to the relations among the countries of the region with their main economic and trade partners; a consideration of trade issues in their regional, hemispheric and multilateral dimensions; financing development; support for reconciling the various economic approaches to and agreements for integration in Latin America and the Caribbean; coordinating economic and social policies and strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises; technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of technical cooperation among developing countries; and activities related to information dissemination, so that the organization's work will reach the greatest number of actors within and outside the region.

These aspects are detailed further in the document entitled "A current vision of SELA", which, at the request of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I am pleased to make available to delegations.

Cooperation between SELA and the United Nations system is of particular importance in this context, given the convergence and coordination of priorities set out at the regional level by the Latin American Council of SELA and those of the international agenda, in particular the agenda of the United Nations and the bodies within its system.

In this respect, I am pleased to affirm that we have continued to strengthen the ties of coordination and joint work of SELA with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, to mention only the United Nations agencies with which we have the closest ties.

Of course, one of the characteristics of SELA is the joint and coordinated work it carries out with regional and international organizations so that we can avoid costly and needless duplications.

Particular mention should be made of the excellent cooperation that SELA has enjoyed over the years with the United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries as a

regional focal point for such technical cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Examples of this fruitful and close cooperation include the regional tasks of programming and negotiating technical cooperation among developing countries, such as that carried out in 1995 for Haiti, which enabled us to create more than 120 cooperation projects. Most of them to date have been carried out with excellent results, such as the project carried out in 1996 in support of small and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean and the one initiated in 1997 in support of decentralization in Central America. A regional exercise for greater cooperation between the Caribbean and Latin America is scheduled for 1998, in Bridgetown, Barbados, and will bring together for the first time directors of international technical cooperation from the entire American and Caribbean region in a Caribbean country.

The Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System trusts that this cooperation will be strengthened and broadened in order to support the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in our efforts to respond positively to the challenges of the globalization of the international economy and of achieving development with social equity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*):

We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.6.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.6?

Draft resolution A/52/L.6 was adopted (resolution 52/3).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*):

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Baltes (Luxembourg): The European Union joined the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.6, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, but at the same time we would like to put on record the following observations.

Regarding operative paragraph 3, we note that the draft resolution urges the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to renew and expand its financial and technical cooperation with the relevant programmes. It is the European Union's understanding that decisions on such activities are up to the UNDP Executive Board in the context of UNDP's agreed priorities and budget.

Regarding operative paragraph 4, the European Union also notes that the resolution adds funds of the United Nations system to the list of bodies which are urged to continue and intensify their support for and cooperation in the activities of SELA. We would have liked some further clarification on the intention of this addition.

Also, the European Union would have welcomed the opportunity for informal consultations on the draft resolution before it came to the plenary.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 25?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 31

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/377)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.2)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.2.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): In its capacity as the Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Indonesia has the distinct honour and privilege of introducing, on behalf of the 55 States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", which is contained in document A/52/L.2 of 15 October 1997.

Before proceeding, however, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and informative report (A/52/377) he has presented under this agenda item on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Earlier this month, on the occasion of the annual coordination meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OIC, held at United Nations Headquarters, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the OIC and the United Nations were natural partners in the cause of peace and prosperity. On the same occasion, Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, referred to the tremendous stake the OIC had in the revitalization of the United Nations through judicious reform and democratization, and stated that much of the advocacy and many of the initiatives that members of the OIC were pursuing would prosper or fade in the forums of the United Nations system.

Indeed, ever since its inception the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been steadfast in its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Over the years, we have witnessed expanded cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC with a view to achieving the common objectives of the preservation of peace and security and the promotion of social and economic development.

The draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce today not only reflects the many tangible forms of cooperation which have been established between the two Organizations, but is also aimed at further enhancing such cooperation. The draft is essentially identical to the resolutions adopted under the same agenda item at earlier sessions of the General Assembly.

The preamble of the draft resolution takes into account the desire of both Organizations to continue to cooperate closely in their common search for solutions to global problems. It recalls the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage the activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It notes the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations, its funds and programmes and specialized agencies and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, its subsidiary organs and its specialized and affiliated institutions. Also, it notes the encouraging progress made in the nine priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the

identification of other areas of cooperation. Furthermore, it recognizes that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other organs and institutions of the OIC system contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It takes into account the report (A/47/277) of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace", in particular section VII, concerning cooperation with regional arrangements and organizations, and the "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60). Finally, with respect to the preamble, it notes with appreciation the determination of both Organizations to strengthen further the existing cooperation by developing specific proposals in the designated priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the political field.

In its operative paragraphs, the General Assembly would, *inter alia*, note with satisfaction the active participation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the work of the United Nations towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The General Assembly would also request the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue cooperation in their common search for solutions to global problems. In addition, the General Assembly would welcome the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to strengthen cooperation between them in areas of common concern and to review the ways and means for enhancing the actual mechanisms of such cooperation. The Assembly would also welcome the efforts of the secretariats of the two Organizations to strengthen information exchange, coordination and cooperation between them in areas of mutual interest in the political field, and their ongoing consultations with a view to developing the modalities of such cooperation. It would further welcome the periodic high-level meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as between senior secretariat officials of the two Organizations, and encourage their participation in important meetings of the two Organizations.

The draft resolution would recommend that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/17, in order to enhance cooperation and for the purpose of review and appraisal of progress, a general meeting between representatives of the Secretariats of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference should take place in 1998. It would also recommend that, again in accordance with General Assembly resolution

50/17, coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions should be held concurrently with the general meeting in 1998. The draft resolution would encourage the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to expand their cooperation with the subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, particularly by negotiating cooperation agreements, and would invite them to multiply the contacts and meetings of the focal points for cooperation in priority areas of interest to the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It would urge the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to enhance cooperation.

The General Assembly would express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the OIC and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions to serve the mutual interests of the two Organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural fields; and would express the hope that the Secretary-General will continue to strengthen the mechanisms of coordination between the two Organizations.

The Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-third session on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Finally, the Assembly would decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference".

On behalf of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I should like to request the Members of the Assembly to support the draft resolution and, as has been the case in previous years, to facilitate its adoption by consensus.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX), of 10 October 1975, I now call on the observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Ansay (Organization of the Islamic Conference): It is my privilege to address the General Assembly this morning on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Laraki, on agenda item 31, which covers the status of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

I would take this opportunity, at the outset, to congratulate the President and his colleagues in the Bureau on their election to their high offices. I know that in the President's capable hands the work of the Assembly will be very ably directed. I also join other delegations in paying tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Razali Ismail, and his colleagues on the outgoing Bureau, for steering the work of the Assembly with remarkable success during its fifty-first session.

The report of the Secretary-General, which is before us in document A/52/377, provides informative material on the activities of cooperation between our two Organizations and their respective subsidiary and specialized organs, agencies and institutions in areas of common concern in 1997. It describes the endeavours of the United Nations system in implementing General Assembly resolution 51/18 of 14 November 1996, which requested the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue cooperation in their common search for solutions to global problems relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, fundamental human rights, social and economic development and technical cooperation, as well as to continue to expand the parameters of this cooperation in response to the growing needs of our common member States. I would, therefore, take the opportunity to extend to the President and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Executive Heads of the various United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, our sincere thanks for their and their respective staffs' efforts, which have kept our common endeavours in full motion throughout the year.

Representatives will recall that General Assembly resolution 50/17 of 20 November 1995 called for strengthening cooperation between our two Organizations in the political field, besides, of course, continuing to expand our ongoing cooperation in several economic, social and humanitarian sectors. As the Secretary-General's report illustrates, this aspect has figured prominently in the two meetings between the Secretaries-General of our two Organizations, held here at the United Nations on 2 May 1997 and 4 October 1997, and in the high-level meeting of officials of the two Organizations held here also on 4

October 1997. This meeting of senior officials preceded the meeting between the Secretaries-General of our two Organizations which I have just mentioned.

These meetings devoted particular attention to ongoing peacemaking efforts in Palestine, Afghanistan, Jammu and Kashmir and Tajikistan, as well as peacekeeping efforts relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Somalia and Cyprus. I would cite two examples of our cooperation at the practical level during the period under review: first, the workings of our respective missions in Afghanistan, which have maintained complementarity and close contact in assisting the various Afghan political factions in finding an agreeable solution to their present predicament; secondly, the joint support of the United Nations and the OIC extended to the inter-Tajik talks, which led to the signing of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Concord in Tajikistan between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, in Moscow on 27 June 1997. On the same occasion, the Secretary-General of the OIC co-signed the Protocol on Guarantees along with the representatives of the United Nations, other observer States and organizations to support the efforts of the international community to ensure the implementation of the peace agreements.

I am glad to report that our cooperation in the social, economic and cultural spheres has proceeded as planned during the period under review. It is focusing on the nine priority areas that have been identified among our two Organizations, namely, the development of science and technology; trade and development; technical cooperation among Islamic countries; assistance to refugees; food security and agriculture; education and the eradication of illiteracy; investment mechanisms and joint ventures; human resource development; and the environment.

The adoption of new cost-effective modalities stemming from the recommendations of the meeting of United Nations and OIC focal points, held in Geneva in June 1995, which were endorsed by the general meeting between the secretariats of the two organizations, held in Geneva in June 1996, is accelerating the programme and project identification, approval and implementation processes. I would cite briefly two recent examples of these endeavours: first, the technical assistance that the OIC and the United Nations Development Programme are providing to the Foundation for Social Peace, a respected African non-governmental organization based in Niamey,

Niger, in implementing its Rural Education and Agricultural Extension facility for the nomads of the Sahel and Sahara regions, with some catalytic financial support from the Perez Guerrero Trust Fund; secondly, the technical assistance being extended by the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the UNDP's Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries to the small and medium-scale industries concerned with food processing and textiles in the Arab and African regions. In both instances, speedy project identification and approval processes reflecting effective coordination between the two Organizations at the working levels are now accelerating the delivery and implementation, to the advantage of the beneficiaries.

I should now like to refer briefly to the annual coordination meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the OIC, held on 2 October 1997, to discuss the agenda of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, in particular those items that were of relevance to the member States of the OIC. I am happy to recall that the meeting was, unprecedentedly, addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General's report mentions in paragraph 2, in response to our invitation, a senior representative from the United Nations Department of Political Affairs also attended the meeting and observed its deliberations. Paragraph 3 of the report of the Secretary-General summarizes the issues that the meeting covered.

The Ambassador of Indonesia, acting in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group and the representative of the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, has graciously introduced, with detailed eloquence, the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference which is before the Assembly in document A/52/L.2 of 15 October 1997. I would take the liberty of drawing attention to 4 of the 13 operative paragraphs, because of their significance.

First, paragraphs 7 and 8 recommend the convening of a general meeting and of coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions in Geneva, concurrently, in 1998. We believe that the convening of the two meetings in the same time-frame, unlike the practice in previous years, will be an efficient and economical way of pursuing the objective of coordination between our two Organizations in areas of common interest.

Secondly, paragraph 9 encourages, among other things, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to negotiate cooperation agreements with their OIC counterparts for cooperation in priority areas of interest to the two Organizations. Two memoranda of understanding signed by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) here in New York last year, and one with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) this year, have paved the way for ISESCO's systematic consultation and effective cooperation with these three major programmes of the United Nations, adding to several it has similarly concluded with other United Nations organizations in the past. We would hope that this process will continue to expand between the relevant organs, agencies and institutions of our two Organizations.

Thirdly, paragraph 10 urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the OIC and its subsidiary and specialized organs and affiliated institutions, in order to enhance cooperation. At a time when the OIC is initiating a four-year action programme of economic and technical cooperation between its member States, it would welcome such assistance, which should go a long way in reinforcing and strengthening its institutional capacity for the operational challenges it will be facing in the process. This aspect was favourably approached in the discussions held between the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations when they last met here earlier this month.

As with the resolution of the preceding year, none of the operative paragraphs contained in this resolution involves any additional financial implications. I am therefore confident that it will attract unanimous approval.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the OIC derives its inspiration and guidance from the teachings of Islam, the religion of peace, which advocates justice, equality, tolerance and cooperation between all nations and all segments of mankind. These noble tenets shall continue to guide our cooperation with the United Nations as we pursue our journey towards the global village of the twenty-first century, in quest of peace, prosperity and progress for all mankind.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on this item. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.2.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/52/L.2 was adopted (resolution 52/4).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I also take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/378)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.3 and Corr.1)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Yemen to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for this month, I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the member States of the League of Arab States, the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.3, under agenda item 33, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

The existing bonds between the United Nations and the League of Arab States were reinforced following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 48/21 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States". That resolution, adopted by consensus, embodies the cooperation sought under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter between the United Nations and regional organizations.

As demonstrated by their common history, the relationship between the two Organizations has been premised on the principles and purposes enshrined in their respective charters. These charters aim at the same

objective, namely, maintenance of international peace and security being in the forefront of their interests.

In view of the fact that the peace process in the Middle East is currently stalling because of genuine difficulties and obstacles that may jeopardize peace and security in the region, there is a dire need for further cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, in order to contribute to the creation of a more favourable atmosphere in which the peace process in the Middle East will lead to a comprehensive, lasting and just peace ensuring the legitimate rights of all parties concerned, so that the Palestinian people can exercise all its legitimate rights on the totality of its national territory, including Jerusalem.

In the same context, there is a pressing need to intensify cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in economic, social and development areas so that the economic and financial resources available may be used in a more coordinated and efficient manner in pursuit of the common interests of the two organizations.

The preambular portion of the draft resolution before us contains paragraphs that underscore the desire of the two organizations to consolidate the ties existing between them in all spheres, and to continue their cooperation, thereby promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution, the Assembly, *inter alia*, expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action he has taken to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system dealing with development and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations, including the latest meeting held in Geneva in 1997.

Paragraph 11 calls for a general meeting to take place every two years between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States. It also calls for inter-agency sectoral meetings to be organized regularly on areas of priority and wide importance in the development of the Arab States, on the basis of agreement between the counterpart programmes of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations.

On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I invite all members of the international community to support the League of Arab States and its efforts to cooperate with the United Nations system in the service of their common goals, as set forth in the text of the draft resolution now before the Assembly. This draft resolution merits adoption by consensus.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Hassouna (League of Arab States): Allow me at the outset to express to the President my sincere congratulations on his election to preside over the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-second session. His election to that lofty post attests to the confidence and high esteem that the international community feels for his country, Ukraine.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is nothing new. It began in the 1940s, when the founding States of the League of Arab States participated in drawing up the United Nations Charter at the San Francisco Conference, thereby contributing to enshrining in the Charter the principle of regional organizations. That principle led to the creation on 22 March 1945 of the League of Arab States, the first regional organization to emerge in the international order following the end of the Second World War.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States has evolved gradually over time. Its first stage began in 1950, when the United Nations Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly, invited the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to attend the session of the Assembly as an observer, and continued until 1981, when the General Assembly invited the League of Arab States to participate officially as an Observer in the sessions and work of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies.

The first contractual relationship between the two organizations, in the sphere of cooperation, was set forth in a memorandum of agreement that was ratified by both organizations in 1960. Subsequently, the two organizations determined to strengthen their cooperation, in keeping with an agreement between the two organizations that was ratified in 1989.

Over the years, cooperation between the two organizations has evolved and now includes several agreements between the League of Arab States and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, establishing cooperation in joint programmes and projects in the interests of the Arab region.

In his report (A/52/378) of 23 September 1997, the Secretary-General indicates that the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States have in recent times continued their practice of meetings and consultations. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States held important consultations at United Nations Headquarters with Mr. Kofi Annan on two occasions, in June and October of this year. The Secretaries-General discussed the various questions before the United Nations of concern to Arab countries and considered ways to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the two organizations. We hope soon to welcome the United Nations Secretary-General at the Headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo to continue the discussion of the various questions of interest to both organizations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States was broadened during the course of a successful joint meeting between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the League of Arab States and its institutions at Geneva in July 1997, as a follow-up to earlier joint meetings between the two organizations held at Geneva in 1993 and Vienna in 1995.

The agenda of that meeting attests to the interest of both organizations in such international and regional questions as the political question of the maintenance of international peace and security or humanitarian questions such as mine clearance, as well as other questions dealing with economic and social cooperation, sustainable development, the environment, combating drugs, crime prevention, agricultural and rural development, family planning, population and health. All those subjects are both regional and international in scope and are dealt with by the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the framework of the active cooperation that they enjoy.

The positive nature of this cooperation is best reflected in the conclusions reached by the participants in that meeting as a result of their evaluation of the achievements realized to date, which demonstrate the need to pursue the cooperation between the two

organizations to foster international peace and security and strengthen social and economic development in the region.

In this respect, I wish to share the view of the participants on the importance of pursuing the joint political efforts of the two organizations in the settlement of regional disputes and crises. I would add here that these efforts should be based on what is currently being done to settle the crisis in Somalia, given that the two organizations are participating in Somalia's national reconciliation process with a view to restoring security to that country. The participants also felt that it is necessary to continue studying the question of strengthening the role of the League of Arab States and its ability to contribute to the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

In the area of disarmament, the participants supported the efforts of the League of Arab States in drafting an agreement to make the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction and encouraged the two organizations to step up their efforts to proclaim it so. They also emphasized the need to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) universal through the accession of all countries. In this respect, the participants noted the accession of all Arab States to the Treaty.

In addition, they expressed their concern over the continuing problem of landmines, which cause great human suffering. We should therefore intensify international efforts to solve this problem. There is no doubt that the recent Oslo agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines represents an important step towards this goal.

One of the major results of the Geneva meeting was the joint agreement of the two organizations on holding a sectoral meeting on international trade and development at the headquarters of the League of Arab States in Cairo in 1998. This is a priority area for achieving progress and for economic and social development in the Arab region. In this respect, I should like, on behalf of the League of Arab States, to thank the Secretariat of the United Nations for its tireless efforts to convene joint meetings between the two organizations and to strengthen cooperation between them in all areas.

The current international order is seeing major changes in regional and international relations. This highlights the increased importance of the United Nations and its crucial role in maintaining international peace and

security. Aware of this reality, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has set forth his reform programme for the Organization, which includes a set of measures and proposals aimed at achieving this goal. The League of Arab States expresses its support for the Secretary-General and its appreciation for his initiative, which is aimed at improving the Organization's performance and strengthening its role.

I would also stress the content of the Secretary-General's report on the programme of reform, which affirms the will of the United Nations to increase cooperation with regional organizations so as to make them ever more active partners with the Organization in all activities related to peacekeeping and international security, including conflict prevention. The League of Arab States stands ready to cooperate with the United Nations in this context, particularly in the light of the League's recent efforts to improve its mechanisms and to create new political and legal bodies for settling regional conflicts, such as the Arab court of justice and its own mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

In the context of its attachment to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in our region, and on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international resolutions, the Council of Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States, at its 108th regular meeting in September, reiterated the commitment of League members to the two essential principles relating to their position on recent developments in the peace process.

First, we attach importance to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace as a strategic goal on the basis of the principles of the peace process — the most important of which is the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) — as well as the principle of land for peace and the implementation of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including its rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State.

Secondly, we reject the policies of the Israeli Government aimed at undermining the peace process and its repudiation of the principles and bases of that process. We also reject its refusal to implement the commitments and agreements undertaken in the course of the peace process; its unilateral measures aimed at imposing a *fait accompli* in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan; and

its aggressions in southern Lebanon. We hold the Israeli Government fully responsible for the consequences of its policies and positions, which have set back the peace process and thrown into question the measures taken in respect of Israel in the framework of the peace process.

Given the dangers facing our region and the escalation resulting from the continuing policies and practices of the Israeli Government, the League of Arab States asks the international community, represented by the United Nations, to assume its responsibilities and role in relaunching the peace process, following all negotiating options and implementing the Organization's resolutions of international legality on the question of Palestine and the Middle East, which is a legal, political and moral obligation. In our view, this is the only guarantee of peace and security for the peoples of the region.

In conclusion, I would affirm the continued and unequivocal support of the League of Arab States for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and wish the Organization every success in its tasks. May it meet the challenges it faces in our world today, where our two organizations are striving to establish respect for the values, principles and laws governing actions between countries and peoples.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.3 and Corr.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/52/L.3 and Corr.1 was adopted (resolution 52/5).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to explain his position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind him that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gilon (Israel): The delegation of Israel has joined the consensus on this resolution for the fourth time in a row. In so doing, we are guided by the desire to make peace with our neighbours, all of which are members of the League of Arab States.

Today, after a long period of standstill in the peace process, there is new hope for progress on the Israeli-

Palestinian track. The nine joint committees have resumed their work after a meeting between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat and between Foreign Minister Levy and Mr. Abu Mazin. Further discussions are expected later this month in Washington.

We still hope for positive developments on the Syrian-Lebanese track. It is regrettable that at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Arab League held in Cairo, a one-sided approach was adopted, and only Israel was blamed for the problems which have at times arisen in the peace process. The Arab League Foreign Ministers called for, *inter alia*, stopping the normalization process between Israel and its Arab neighbours, abjuring Arab participation on multilateral tracks, adhering to the Arab boycott against Israel and more.

The peace process which began in Madrid in 1991 was based on two tracks: the bilateral tracks between Israel and its neighbours, and multilateral tracks between Israel and the entire Arab world. Freezing one track of the peace process contributes nothing to the advancement of the other track.

Despite our concerns, we also note that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs have at the same time emphasized their commitment to peace. We hope that now, when there are new prospects for the peace process, they will stand by their commitments and choose a constructive role in advancing peace in our region.

Israel supports cooperation between the United Nations and various regional organizations, including the League of Arab States. Moreover, Israel does not seek to replace the current regional system of States with a new organizational structure in the Middle East. Indeed, the cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations is based on provisions of the United Nations Charter. In this context, it is regrettable that Israel still does not belong to a regional political group — which its geographical location would warrant — at the United Nations due to the political objections of some Member States.

Israel calls upon the members of the League of Arab States to lift their objection to the admission of Israel to the Asian Group. The fact that Israel is currently denied membership in any regional political group directly contradicts the basic principle of the universality of the United Nations, as well as the principle of sovereign equality.

Israel takes this opportunity to call for increased cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme and the League of Arab States for the establishment of joint projects within the framework of regional agricultural development in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Council.

Israel feels that the Arab world should provide a greater share of aid to the Palestinian Council to match the aid given by the European Union, Norway, Japan and the United States.

Israel welcomes all efforts to advance the social, economic, education, health and cultural standing of Palestinian residents of the territories, within the framework of participation between the League of Arab States and United Nations agencies.

This is the first resolution on an issue related to the Middle East to be adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. We are pleased that the resolution was adopted by consensus. We would therefore take this opportunity to recommend that all parties to the peace process exercise restraint in both the language of draft resolutions to be submitted, as well as with regard to their stated purposes.

We cannot build confidence in the Middle East by engaging in political battle in New York. The peace process is by its nature bilateral, between the parties. Inflammatory rhetoric offered in international forums surely belongs to another era.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158

Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly

Draft resolution (A/52/L.5)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Ecuador to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.5.

Mr. Camacho (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.5, entitled "Observer status for the Andean Community in the General Assembly".

The member countries of the Andean Community share particularly close social, cultural and historical ties. They became independent through a common effort headed by Simón Bolívar.

Following a century and a half of independence, the plenipotentiaries of Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru signed the Subregional Integration Agreement on 26 May 1969, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. Venezuela signed the Agreement in 1973, and in 1976 Chile withdrew from it, leaving the five States that today make up the Andean Community.

The process of integration continued to develop: in October 1992 the Andean Free Trade Area was established; in 1995 the Andean Customs Union was established when the Common External Tariff came into force. Finally, at the seventh Andean Presidential Council, held at Quito, Ecuador, on 5 September 1995, the five countries decided to reorganize the executive and administrative bodies of the system to create the Andean Integration System — the Andean Community we know today.

As a result of that reorganization, the six principal bodies of the Andean Integration System were set up: the Andean Presidential Council, the highest body of the System, which is composed of the Heads of State of the member countries and which meets annually; the Andean Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs; the Commission of the Andean Community; the General Secretariat, as the permanent executive body, with its headquarters in Lima, Peru, and headed by the Secretary-General; the Andean Community Court of Justice, with its headquarters in Quito, Ecuador; and the Andean Parliament, whose headquarters will be in Bogotá, Colombia.

The main objectives of the Andean Community are to promote the balanced and harmonious development of the member countries on an equal basis through integration and economic and social cooperation; to accelerate economic and social growth and generate employment; to reduce vulnerability to external factors and to improve the position of member countries in the global economic context; and to strengthen subregional

solidarity and reduce differences in existing levels of development among its members.

On behalf of the member States of the Andean Community, I would like to express our gratitude to the members of other systems of integration, such as the European Union, the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), all of which generously offered to sponsor the draft resolution that I am introducing to the Assembly. We are also grateful for the sponsorship of the United States of America.

The Andean Community attaches great importance to its relations with other integration systems. These past few days, the President of Ecuador, Dr. Fabián Alarcón, the current Chairman of the Andean Presidential Council, accompanied by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Community, has been visiting Brussels in order to strengthen ties between the European Union and the Andean Community.

Similarly, the Andean Community is involved in negotiations with MERCOSUR with the aim of establishing a free-trade zone between the two groups within 10 years. To the same end, negotiations are also under way with Panama and CARICOM, and discussions are foreseen with the Central American Integration System in the future.

Before concluding, I wish to point out that Canada, Cyprus, France and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have joined the 35 sponsors which appear in document A/52/L.5. We hope that the General Assembly will welcome this draft resolution and give it its unanimous support.

Mr. Escovar-Salom (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela is very pleased to join in sponsoring this draft resolution aimed at granting observer status to the Andean Community in the General Assembly.

The Andean Community has enabled its member countries — Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela — to promote balanced harmonious and equitable development through economic and social integration.

For example, we have established a free-trade area, without tariff or para-tariff restrictions, and we are negotiating with the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Caribbean Community

(CARICOM) to extend that zone over the next 10 years. Similarly, we have signed new cooperation agreements with the European Union in order to promote the flow of investment and the transfer of technology.

This dynamism imparted by the Andean Community to our economies has enabled us to create sources of stable and productive employment and to fight effectively against poverty, marginalization and the other forms of suffering that still affect a considerable portion of our population.

The purpose of the Andean Community is to improve the standard of living of the inhabitants of the subregion. Observer status at the United Nations would facilitate the realization of this mission. Venezuela is open to relations with the rest of the world. We view globalization as a fundamental trend of the times and of the coming century. But to achieve globalization many roads will have to be crossed, and there are many means of crossing them. Therefore, Venezuela welcomes integration efforts with other countries. The Andean Community is one such means, and that is why we would welcome its presence as an observer at the United Nations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.5.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.5?

Draft resolution A/52/L.5 was adopted (resolution 52/6).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 158?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform delegates that agenda item 42, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", originally scheduled for this morning, will be taken up at a later date to be announced. I should also like to inform members that the

programme of work for the remainder of October, for the month of November and for the beginning of December has been issued as document A/INF/52/3/Add.1 this morning. The list of speakers for each of the items listed in that document is now open.

The General Assembly will be kept informed, in due course, of the dates for the consideration of other agenda items as well as of any additions or changes.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.